



Trenton Brownfields Ride a Wave of Revitalization



Lead extraction underway at a brownfield site in Trenton.

Trenton, NJ

The Assunpink Creek in Trenton, New Jersey flows through many residential neighborhoods, past active but underutilized industrial parks, and alongside abandoned properties. Severe rainstorms often cause the Assunpink to overflow, flooding homes and businesses and once shutting down a portion of the nation's busiest train service. Historical efforts to control the flooding problems along the creek have proven unsuccessful, and industries encroaching on the waterway have contributed to the added burden of environmental contamination. Through a partnership among federal, state, and county agencies, however, preliminary environmental assessments have been conducted on properties along the creek to determine the extent of this contamination. These assessments represent part of a larger effort to turn this brownfields waterway into a recreational gem.

As part of its brownfields restoration efforts on the creek area, Trenton is planning a 99-acre urban park and greenway that will include several baseball and soccer fields, playgrounds, picnic areas, an expanded pool facility, tennis and basketball courts, and an 18-hole chip and putt golf course. The city has enlisted the help of several partners to bring this vision to reality, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE); U.S. Economic Development Administration; EPA; Federal Emergency Management Agency; New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP); New Jersey Economic Development Administration (NJEDA); New Jersey Institute of Technology; Mercer County; engineering and planning firms; planning authorities; and community groups such as the Assunpink Creek Watershed Association.

Showcase Communities are selected by the Brownfields National Partnership to demonstrate that through cooperation, federal, state, local, and private efforts can be concentrated around brownfields to restore these sites, stimulate economic development, and revitalize communities. Showcase Communities serve as models for broad-based cooperative efforts to support locally based initiatives. Showcases receive up to \$400,000 from EPA for both environmental assessments and to support the loan of a federal employee to the Showcase for up to three years. Showcase Communities receive additional financial and technical support from the Partnership's more than 20 federal partners, depending on the community need and program eligibility.

JUST THE FACTS:

- As part of its restoration efforts for the Assunpink Creek area, Trenton is planning a 99-acre urban park and greenway that will include several baseball and soccer fields, playgrounds, picnic areas, tennis and basketball courts, and an 18-hole chip and putt golf course.
- The revitalization effort will help restore the creek's natural floodplain by cleaning several brownfields along the water's edge.
- Historical sites that will have improved access through Trenton's brownfields redevelopment efforts include a blacksmith shop that has been in operation since the 1800s, an historical mansion, and an African American cemetery dating back to the 1700s.

The City of Trenton has a strong record of brownfields redevelopment—the Assunpink Creek greenway project is only one of nearly 60 brownfields projects that are part of Trenton's Brownfields Showcase Community efforts. To date, two industrial parks, several residential and commercial projects, a major shopping center, an arena, and a stadium have been completed, among other successes.

Previous construction of sites along the creek has created impermeable surfaces that contribute to flooding and non-point source pollution. The revitalization effort will help restore the creek's natural floodplain by cleaning several of these brownfields along the water's edge and removing a significant portion of the impermeable area. Property acquisition by the city is in progress.

Preliminary assessments have been conducted on all targeted sites. EPA is providing technical assistance to perform more detailed site investigations on some properties, and NJDEP and NJEDA are funding investigations on the remaining targeted sites.

In addition to addressing contamination concerns, conducting cleanup, and creating recreational space, this revitalization project will connect the existing Mulberry Street, George Paige, and Hetzel Field parks, as well as improve access to historical sites. These historical sites include a blacksmith shop that has been in continuous operation since the 1800s, an historical mansion which is now a public library, and an African American cemetery that was in use from the 1700s to the 1800s.

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The city's Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot has helped leverage more than \$1.4 million in cleanup and redevelopment funding, and create more than 300 jobs. Trenton continues to strengthen its brownfields program through support of innovative technologies when appropriate, seeking funding from diverse sources, and relying on community involvement as an underpinning of its projects.

CONTACTS:

For more information on EPA's Showcase Communities, contact Tony Raia of OSWER's Office of Brownfields Cleanup and Redevelopment at (202) 566-2758

Or visit EPA's Brownfields Web site at:

<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>